

ROB BONTA
Attorney General

State of California
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



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August 20, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino, Chair
California State Senate, Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate President Pro Tempore
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 215 (Chiu): Planning and Zoning Law: housing element: violations. SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino and Pro Tempore Atkins,

The Attorney General is pleased to support Assembly Bill 215 (Chiu), legislation that would strengthen enforcement of the State's housing laws, increase compliance, and support efforts to address California's housing crisis.

California faces a housing shortage of epic proportion. Over the last four decades, housing needs have significantly outpaced housing production. The shortage has caused housing costs to skyrocket, making it harder for Californians to keep a roof over their heads. California hosts a disproportionate share of the nation's homeless, with around 150,000 people unhoused. Renters are spending a significant portion of their paychecks on rent, and high home purchase costs have led to the lowest homeownership rates since the 1940's. The housing crisis is hitting everyone, but especially low- and moderate-income Californians, who often spend more than half their income on housing costs.

To address this intolerable housing crisis, the Legislature has passed several important pieces of legislation in recent years, including the Housing Package in 2017 and the Housing Crisis Act of 2019. The Attorney General's goal is to ensure compliance with these laws. While many cities are doing their part, some cities remain unwilling to meet their fair share of housing needs, choosing instead to violate state laws.

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To achieve greater compliance with these laws, AB 215 would expand the authority of the Department of Housing and Community Development to refer violations to the Attorney General. AB 215 would also clarify the Attorney General's independent authority to enforce the State's housing laws. Lastly, the bill would clarify the statute of limitations for the State to enforce potential housing law violations.

The Legislature has done its part, passing several laws that address the housing crisis. Now it is time for state regulators and local governments to work together and abate this crisis. Attorney General Bonta urges your support for AB 215.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jana Staniford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JANA STANIFORD
Deputy Attorney General
Office of Legislative Affairs

For ROB BONTA
Attorney General